

Expression of Interest

Outfitting and Guiding on the Saguache Ranger District of the Rio Grande National Forest



Providing recreation services and facilities is a key part of the Forest Service's mission. To enhance rural communities and facilitate greater access to National Forest Lands, the Rio Grande National Forest is interested in providing new activities and services to help visitors enjoy the outdoors through permitted recreational activities. As such, the Rio Grande National Forest is seeking information from businesses that may be interested in holding a special use authorization for the outfitting and guiding activities on the Rio Grande National Forest within the Saguache Ranger District near the communities of Villa Grove, Saguache, and Crestone, Colorado and throughout the entirety of the established Saguache Ranger District Boundary. The type of service and location depends on whether existing services are already adequately available and if commercial capacity exists.

Outfitters and guides include commercial businesses, nonprofit organizations, community organizations, and educational institutions; these entities facilitate recreational experiences for individuals or groups by providing services, education, training, and/or equipment on National Forest lands.

Services that will be considered include but are not limited to activities such as:

- Climbing activities such as mountaineering, sport climbing and ice climbing (limited trips) in the following areas: numerous peaks which mostly form the Spine of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains along with additional peaks which are adjacent to or near the Spine and other areas within the Saguache Ranger District. The Saguache Ranger District shares this ridgeline with the Salida Ranger District, the San Carlos Ranger District, and the Great Sand Dunes Preserve respectively. The District is an expansive geographic area with diverse terrain, elevations and two Wilderness Areas, many drainages, trails, and roads which lend themselves to a great variety of recreational opportunities. We encourage consideration of these resources for your recreational activities which would utilize capacity throughout the District and diminish use in areas of high public visitation where capacity is limited.
- Non-motorized trail-based activities such as mountain biking, packing, horseback-based trail riding, backpacking, hiking, camping, snowshoeing, and trail running on the Saguache Ranger District.
- Motorized activities limited to Forest System roads and motorized trails, such as ATV/UTV/OHV/4-Wheel drive activities or shuttle services to transport individuals on/off the Forest.

Requirements

Information Requests	Submission Format	Submission Criteria
<p>Questions regarding this expression of interest can be submitted until 5:00 pm MST on January 21, 2022.</p> <p>For more information about the process please contact:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Jerald “Jerry” Pacheco (719) 655-6101 jerald.l.pacheco@usda.gov</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tristram Post (719) 850-2358 tristram.post@usda.gov</p> <p>For specific questions about the Outfitting and Guiding program on the Saguache Ranger District of the Rio Grande National Forest, proponents may contact Jerald “Jerry” Pacheco at the email address provided above, or by phone at 719-655-6101.</p> <p>For general information on special use permits with the Forest Service, applicants should visit the USFS Special Uses website at: https://www.fs.fed.us/specialuses/</p> <p>Additional resources regarding the Special Uses Program on the Rio Grande National Forest can be found at: https://www.fs.usda.gov/main/riogrande/passes-permits/event-commercial</p>	<p>The Forest Service asks respondents to submit their proposal either hard copy or electronically.</p> <p>Electronic files must be in a Microsoft Office program or PDF format and can be emailed to: jerald.l.pacheco@usda.gov</p> <p>Please mail or hand deliver hard copy proposals by 4:30 pm MST on January 21, 2022 to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Rio Grande National Forest Saguache Ranger District Attn: Jerald “Jerry” Pacheco 46525 Colorado 114 Saguache, Colorado, 81149</p> <p>Any page with proprietary or confidential information must be noted with a disclaimer, however applicants should be aware that proposals are broadly subject to public disclosure pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (5 USC § 552).</p>	<p>Please provide the following in your proposal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A cover letter expressing your interest, including a statement of your technical experience and financial capability to offer the proposed activity. Proposed Activity details <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What services you would like to be authorized to provide? Where would you like to provide above listed services? What number of service days (or clients) would you be requesting? What season(s) of use would you request? A description of services you would like to provide. What is your experience with these activities as well as your business experience? What is the timeframe for beginning potential operations?

The purpose of this public notice is to determine whether sufficient competitive interest exists that would warrant issuance of a prospectus. If a prospectus were issued, the Forest Service would review proposals through a competitive process and issue a limited number of outfitting and guiding permits under the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act.

Special Use Permits issued in response to this expression will be subject to environmental review and public scoping under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 and must be consistent with the Rio Grande National Forest Land Management Plan, as well as adhere to Forest Orders

(https://www.fs.usda.gov/detailfull/riogrande/landmanagement/?cid=fsbdev3_000804&width=full)

If a permit is issued, fees will be charged according to current directives. The fee is considered land use rent for operating a commercial venture on public lands and serves to cover the costs of administering the permit. Annual permit fees are typically calculated at 3% of gross revenue.

This document is not intended as a formal offering for the award of any legal authorization or for participation in future expressions of interest. The Forest reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to withdraw the request for proposal and/or not issue any related permits or other request for proposals, and to retain use of the ideas or materials submitted in any manner deemed other than that which is set forth herein.

The Forest Service will not return materials submitted in connection with this request for proposal. All materials submitted in response to this request for proposal shall become the property of Forest Service. The Forest Service likewise reserves the right, at any time, to change any components, concepts, or approaches of the request for proposal. All costs associated with responding to the request for proposal are the sole responsibility of the respondent and any such costs shall not be reimbursed by the Forest Service.

In accordance with Federal civil rights law and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) civil rights regulations and policies, the USDA, its Agencies, offices, and employees, and institutions participating in or administering USDA programs are prohibited from discriminating based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by USDA (not all bases apply to all programs). Remedies and complaint filing deadlines vary by program or incident.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotope, American Sign Language, etc.) should contact the responsible Agency or USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TTY) or contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program discrimination complaint, complete the USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form, AD-3027, found online at (http://www.ascr.usda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html) and at any USDA office or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by: (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410; (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.